



# STORIES OF THE SOUL (HOPE LESSON 2)

In this lesson, youth continue to explore how their every day stories connect with the Christian faith story.

## ENHANCER OF JOY

Hope

## DURATION

66 minutes

## LESSON DEVELOPED BY

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## GOAL

Exploring Stories of Seeking and Experiencing Hope and Healing

## TIPS TO PREPARE

Read *Soul Stories*. This activity is explained in detail in this book. Pray for your students, review the session, and examine your own life story. Gather the stories of a myriad of hope-filled bible stories that you can share with the young people.

## MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- Bibles
- Pens
- Journals

## SETTING THE ATMOSPHERE

- Play music as students enter the room. Music should be energetic and uplifting
- Set up students in a circle so they can engage in dialogue with one another

## SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Romans 5:5 [NIV] – *And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

## Purpose

The purpose of this session is for young people to reflect on their stories in light of the Christian faith story in order to guide young people’s actions in the world.

## Objectives

Youth will continue to engage in a story-linking process by connecting their everyday story with the story of historical figures in light of the Christian faith story.

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## Further Study

Wimberly, Anne Streaty. *Soul Stories: African American Christian Education*. Rev. ed. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005.

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## Gather

### **Gather (10 minutes)**

#### **Prayer and Greeting**

- At the opening of the session, begin with prayer. Invite a group member to give the prayer. Indicate that the focal scripture was read in Session 1.
- Then indicate that a second scripture is being added in this session. It is Psalm 139:13-14. Ask a group member to read it aloud: "For you created me in my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know full well." (Ps. 139:13-14 NIV). Invite students to greet one another with the words, "Welcome! You are fearfully and wonderfully made."

#### **Connection Starter**

- Invite each person in the group to share something that happened in the past week that gave him or her a sense of hope.
- Tell people to share not just what it was that gave them hope but why that particular thing gave them hope.

#### **Introduction**

Youth leaders can open with the following introduction:

Last time we met we learned about Starr's life and related her journey to our own life. We ended by being reminded of God's love for us that give us dignity and grace; and that love gives us hope. We were also reminded of God's justice and our role in justice-making. The key is to know deep within ourselves that our identity should never be anchored in other's perception of us. Rather our identity comes from and is anchored in God. Today, we want to look at what appears in the scriptures that affirms this truth..

We are still doing story-linking. But, this time, we will link our stories with the Bible.

Are you ready? Well, let's begin!

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## Engage

### **Engage (40 minutes)**

#### **Activity 1: Disclose the Bible Story**

- Invite students to open their Bibles to Psalm 139. Go around the group having them each take a verse.
- Invite one student to read for a second time Psalm 139 in its entirety. However, when we reach verses 13 and 14, everyone is to join in reading it aloud.
- Then invite group members to see to consider the Bible as a mirror that is trying to reveal our true identity.
- Invite group members to speak aloud their responses to the question: "Up to verses 13 and 14, what does the Bible tell us to believe about who we are?"
- Then invite them to consider the follow-up question: "Based on the scripture, who is Starr, me, and the rest of us in our church, schools, and communities?"
- Hand out sheets of paper, and invite group members to look at the scripture on their own and write down key themes/words that give them answers to the last question.
- After a few minutes of writing, invite them to describe share aloud the themes/words they wrote and to share how these themes/words challenge their understanding and experience of hope.
- Ask them to share any other questions that might emerge from the reading of Psalm 139.

#### **Activity 2: Envision God's Activity Today**

- In the form of a poem, rap, or drawing, invite young people to share how God forms and informs our identity. In other words, who, where, and what is God doing to make us who we are and inform we are becoming?
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## Reflect

### **Reflect (10 minutes)**

#### **Activity 3: Anticipate Ongoing Response to God**

- Invite students into a time of reflective journaling. Tell them that after an activity like this it is essential that they take a moment to reflect on what God might be saying to them. Ask the group to respond to the following questions:
1. What negative perceptions do you have of yourself that might hinder you from being hopeful or

envisioning a promising way forward in your life?

2. How did God speak to you through the Psalm to challenge your negative self-perception?

- Invite participants to share with the group one thing they will take with them concerning the message in Psalm 139 and the focal scripture from Romans God's activity in their lives.
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## Send Forth

### ***Send Forth (5 minutes)***

Remind students that the Bible is relevant for issues they face today. Tell them that if we allow God to speak through the scripture and guide our actions that we will experience true joy in our lives and that we will always have a reason for which to hope.

- Ask the young people if they have specific prayers they want to hold before God for themselves, their families or friends.
- Once the young people have shared, invite a young person to close out the group in prayer.